



Jane Charmelo

out & about

Mayslake Hall to undergo further restoration

*100-year-old mansion
a National Register
landmark*

Over time, weather and the elements have a way of wearing down the durability and aesthetics of any building, and Mayslake Hall is no exception.

The 100-year-old Oak Brook mansion, owned by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC), is undergoing a \$6.4 million certified master plan project that will “repair structural deficiencies and other problems with the roof, masonry, wood, stucco, windows and foundation,” according to a FPDDC release, which mentions that the project also includes improving drainage and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility.

History

The 100-year-old Tudor-style building, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Feb. 18, 1994), was commissioned in 1919 to be built for Francis Stuyvesant Peabody, who founded one of the nation’s largest coal companies in 1883.

Intended to be his retirement home, construction on the roughly 840-acre site was completed in 1921 and Peabody moved in shortly afterward, then died in August 1922. His second wife, Mary, sold the mansion to the Sacred Heart, Order of Friars Minor in the mid-1920s.

The Franciscan friars made a number of changes to the mansion over the years, and then began selling off pieces of the property in the 1930s, including 300 acres for the Trinity Lakes and Whitehall subdivisions in the 1970s.

In 1990, when the remaining 89 acres were to be sold to a Westmont real-estate developer—who planned to build 130 luxury homes—a public campaign was launched to preserve the property, and through a referendum, the FPDDC purchased that parcel of property in 1993 for \$17.5 million.

A DuPage County cultural gem

“Mayslake Hall has been on the landscape for over 100 years,” pointed out Kevin Horsfall, FPDDC assistant director of resource management and development.

He said the forest preserve district began making repairs and restorations in early 2000, much of which focused on “life safety” concerns on the interior of the 29,000-square-foot building.

Horsfall continued, saying that the “first major restoration” was undertaken in 2008, including what was known as the “living room,”

as well as refinishing floors and plaster areas.

He quipped that as with any old structure, “There are a lot of creaks, a lot of cracks.”

Between 2019 and 2021, the FPDDC was able to complete more restorations, thanks to donations, such as restoring the walnut staircase in the main hall. An \$80,000 grant from the Public Museum Capital Grants Program, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois State Museum, was used to restore the solarium, and the district had also received a \$200,000 grant to restore the south courtyard. Asphalt in the west parking lot was replaced in 2021.

Now, a \$750,000 capital grant from the same grant source has allowed the FPDDC to begin working on exterior building projects, Horsfall noted, adding, “There are so many components to this project.”

The master plan will “address some structural defects that occurred through natural wear and tear,” he described, adding that these items are identified as being of necessity.

“We have invested a lot in that structure ... No more piece-meal [repairs],” Horsfall emphasized, but instead, the focus is now on maintaining the exterior for the next 50 years, “to button it all up” and also to protect the restorations and repairs on the inside of the mansion.

The upcoming restorations will “allow the building to breathe properly,” the director continued, “in a manner that’s going to minimize our maintenance long-term.”

He pointed out that terms of the grant require the projects to follow certain guidelines in keeping with the historic nature of the building, so some of the components will be repaired, rather than replaced, whenever possible.

In addition to addressing structural and foundation deficiencies, Horsfall said the north part of the parking lot is being re-graded “for better [ADA] accessibility” to the building.

When asked why saving—and investing in—the 100-year-old mansion is important to county residents, the director responded that besides having National Register status, it holds “cultural” significance as a venue where many events have taken place that are of benefit to the public, one of them being the annual native plant sale.

The FPDDC has held a variety of art fairs and other forest preserve district events over the years, and the mansion is home to First Folio Theatre, which in 1997 first performed “The Tempest” on a custom-designed outdoor stage at the Peabody estate.

Horsfall said the theater production company is so important to the cultural aspect of the



FPDDC PHOTO Lombardian

The 100-year-old Mayslake Hall, former mansion of Francis Stuyvesant Peabody, is undergoing more renovations as part of a \$6.4 million certified master plan project. The focus of this project is exterior work, based on a 2020 assessment of “structural problems and material deficiencies.” Pictured here at a July kick-off are (left to right) Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC) landscape architect and Project Manager for Restoration Mark Decker, Assistant Director of Planning Kevin Horsfall, state Rep. Deanne Mazzochi, FPDDC District 3 Commissioner Linda Painter, FPDDC President Daniel Hebreard, FPDDC District 2 Commissioner Tina Tyson-Dunne and state Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton (24th District).

mansion that currently, “We’re actually working our construction around it [the theater’s opening season in November].”

Additionally, according to the FPDDC, the surrounding forest preserve and off-leash dog park will remain open.

The future

“The public wanted to save the facility,” the director reiterated, so the FPDDC is “trying to re-imagine [it] for the future.”

Having worked on the property for over 20 years, “It’s taken a long time and we still have

a long way to go,” he continued.

However, Horsfall summed up, “It’s been a labor of love for a lot of years for many people.”

For information on making a donation toward the project, visit the Friends of the Forest Preserve District at dupageforest.org/friends.

To learn more about the Peabody estate/ Mayslake Hall, 1717 31st St., Oak Brook, visit dupageforest.org.

To learn more about First Folio Theatre, visit firstfolio.org.

Bond set at \$350,000 for Cook County man charged with drug induced homicide

DuPage County State’s Attorney Bob Berlin and DuPage County Sheriff James Mendrick announced that bond has been set for an Oak Park man charged with supplying fentanyl to an acquaintance who in turn supplied it to his girlfriend resulting in her fatal overdose.

Bishop Moore, 62, appeared in bond court where Judge Anthony Coco set bond at \$350,000 with 10 percent to apply.

Moore is charged with one count of drug induced homicide, a Class X felony. On Aug. 19, a second man

allegedly involved in the overdose death of 29-year-old Margaret McCabe, Sergius Harty, 29, of Glen Ellyn, appeared at a bond hearing where Judge John Kinsella set bond at \$500,000 with 10 percent to apply. Harty is also charged with one count of drug induced homicide.

On Nov. 5, 2021, the DuPage County Sheriff’s Office responded to a call of an unresponsive female, later identified as McCabe, in unincorporated Clarendon Hills. The call was placed by a family member. McCabe was immediately transported to

a local hospital where she was pronounced deceased. An investigation into McCabe’s death found that she died of fentanyl intoxication.

It is alleged that on Nov. 5, 2021, McCabe traveled with Harty to Chicago to purchase narcotics from Moore.

It is alleged that Harty purchased several bags of narcotics from Moore and that he gave one bag containing fentanyl to McCabe. It is alleged that once at home, McCabe ingested the fentanyl purchased from Moore and given to her by Harty. On Aug. 18, Harty was taken into custody on a

\$25,000 with 10 percent to apply arrest warrant for unlawful possession of a controlled substance issued the previous day. Moore was taken into custody Aug. 19 without incident.

“As I said earlier, the only way to stop this heartbreaking, senseless loss of life is to hold those who supply fatal doses of narcotics responsible,” Berlin said. “Thanks to the outstanding work of DuPage County Sheriff James Mendrick’s office, we were able to file charges against another individual suspected of being a link in the deadly supply chain of illegal

narcotics that allegedly took the life of Margaret McCabe.”

“I would once again like to thank our detectives’ division and DuPage County State’s Attorney Bob Berlin’s office for their dogged persistence in the case and the preceding case in which charges were brought against Sergius Harty,” Mendrick said. “If you’re peddling this poison in DuPage County, we will bring you to justice.”

Moore’s next court appearance is scheduled Sept. 12 for arraignment in front of Judge Michael Reidy.